



# WATER RELATED SAFETY

Water related activities can provide you and your family with hours of fun. With the hot days of summer on hand, more and more families are turning to water for their family enjoyment.

Lakes and pools have long been the summer attraction when it comes to fun in the sun, but there are hidden dangers. Every year approximately 3600 people die due to drowning, and approximately 1000 more will die from drowning and other causes related to boating incidents.

More than one in four fatal drowning victims are children 14 and younger. For every child who dies from drowning, another four will receive emergency hospital care for nonfatal water injuries.

Nonfatal water related injuries can cause brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities including memory problems, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning.

Fatal drowning remains the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages 1 to 14 years. Many factors play into the causes of accidental drowning, but one thing is certain, accidental drowning is preventable.

Water related activities can be safe and still be fun. By utilizing the following water safety tips, you and your family are sure to enjoy a much safer day in the water.



## General Water Safety Tips

- **Maintain constant supervision.** Watch children around any water environment (pool, stream, lake, tub, hot tub, toilet, bucket of water), no matter what skills your child has acquired and no matter how shallow the water.
- **Don't rely on substitutes.** The use of bath seats, flotation devices and inflatable toys cannot replace parental/caregiver supervision. Such devices could suddenly shift position, lose air or slip out from underneath a child, creating a drowning hazard.
- **Parents/caregivers should take an infant and child CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) course.** Knowing these skills is important around the water and will expand your capabilities to provide care for your child...it can be a lifesaver when seconds count.

## Pool, Spa and Hot Tub Safety

Enroll children in a water safety course or learn-to-swim program. If you choose to enroll a child under age 4 in a water safety course or learn-to-swim program, know that this is primarily a way for you and your child to have fun together in the water. The American Academy of Pediatrics does NOT recommend swimming lessons for kids under age 4 because they are developmentally not yet ready. It will not make your child "drown-proof," but will teach important behaviors about water safety, such as not pushing, running, diving in shallow water, or swimming alone.

Never leave a child unobserved in a pool. Adult supervision is essential. A parent's/caregiver's eyes must be on the child at all times.

Install a phone by the pool or keep a cordless phone nearby so you can call 911 in an emergency. Better yet, put 911 in your speed dial. Keep rescue equipment by the pool. Enclose the pool completely with a barrier. Fences should be at least four feet high and have self-latching, self-closing gates. Layers of protection are important, so also consider using door and pool alarms and pool safety covers. Be sure to lock or remove ladders from aboveground pools. Remove all toys from pools to avoid children being tempted to retrieve them.

Hot tubs pose a drowning risk to children and overheating risks to very young children. Always secure safety covers and barriers to prevent children from gaining access to spas or hot tubs when not in use. If a child is missing, always look in the pool or spa first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability